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GAIN Report

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Bangladesh Labeling Requirements for Packaged Food 2013

Report Categories:

Food and Agricultural Import Regulations and
Standards - Certification
Exporter Guide

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Report Highlights:

Bangladeshi regulations stipulate that all imported food products must be labeled to indicate the country of origin, quantity or weight, ingredients, and dates of manufacture and expiration. Labeling may be in English or Bangla (Bengali) language. Specific provisions of the Bangladesh Import Policy Orders are summarized in this report.

General Information:

Introduction

Bangladeshi regulations stipulate that all imported food products must be labeled to indicate the country of origin, quantity or weight, ingredients, and dates of manufacture and expiration. Labeling may be in English or Bangla (Bengali) language. Imports of baby food and foods containing milk must be in "tin containers" (cans), and nonfat dried milk must be in bags or tins (cans). The product's composition, the percentage of various ingredients, and the statement "There is no alternative to breastfeeding" must be printed in Bangla on each container of baby food that contains cream. For all food and beverage products (except for wine and liquor), including those that are imported, the dates of manufacture and expiration must be clearly printed. All such printing must be on the containers; separately printed labels pasted on the containers are not acceptable.

Bangladeshi Labeling Requirements for Packaged Food

There is no separate law regulating the labeling requirements for food and agricultural commodities in Bangladesh. The labeling of domestically produced and packaged condensed milk and dried milk powder are prescribed in Bangladesh's Pure Food Rules (1967) promulgated by the Department of Health. The government was granted the power to implement these rules via the Bangladesh Pure Food Ordinance of 1959. Although these rules detail the provisions on food poisoning, food coloring, preservatives in food, etc., there is no mention of the labeling requirements for packaged food items, except for condensed milk and dried milk powder.

The ordinance was amended in 2005 and renamed as The Bangladesh Pure Food (Amendment) Act 2005. While the amendments did include revisions of some definitions and financial penalty enhancements for offenses, there was no mention of labeling. Currently, the main legal instrument that regulates the labeling requirements of imported food products is the Import Policy Order 2009-12. In light of requirements in the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) and the Agreement on the Application of Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) Measures, the Product Labeling Policy was introduced in 2006 to ensure that no barriers are created for the importation and exportation of goods, and to ensure that imported products have proper labels. The policy refers explicitly to international labeling standards to be observed in 15 sectors.

Details on the Import Policy Order: Import Policy Order 2009-12

Type of Regulation: Final

Publication Date: January 01 2010

Notification to the WTO: Yes

Effective Date: Date of publication of the final notification in the Official Gazette of Bangladesh

Products Affected: All imported items

Agency in Charge: Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh

Comments/suggestions should be addressed to:

Secretary
Ministry of Commerce, Government of Bangladesh
Bangladesh Secretariat
Shegunbagicha, Dhaka- 1000

Note: The text of the notification can be assessed at
http://www.mincom.gov.bd/images/additional_images/Import%20Policy%20Order%202009-2012-English.doc

Bangladesh Import Policy Orders 2009-12

The following are the provisions of the Bangladesh Import Policy Orders 2009-12 in regard to labeling.

Import by Mentioning “Country of Origin” (Section 5.6)

In all cases of import, the country of origin has to be mentioned clearly on goods, packages and containers. A certificate regarding country of origin issued by the concerned authority of the exporting country must be submitted, along with other import documents at the time of release from the port of entry. Cotton imports are not required to mention country of origin on each bale, but the country of origin must be mentioned in the phytosanitary certificate. However, all export-oriented industries requiring imports of raw materials are waived from the restriction of country of origin subject to the conditions imposed by the Foreign Exchange Regulation Act, Bangladesh Bank and Commercial Banks.

Inscription of Name, Address and TIN Number of Importer (Section 5.7)

The name, address and TIN number are required to be inscribed or printed in indelible ink on at least 2 percent of the largest packet, cover, can, sack pack, wooden box or other packets containing the imported goods. The following imports are exempt:

- Products imported uncovered and in bulk;
- Products valued up to \$5,000 in each *challan* (consignment);
- Imports in the government sector;
- Imports of approved foreign aid-based products;
- Imports of free samples, advertisement materials and gift items valued at \$1,000 or less, as per provisions of the Import Policy Order;
- Imports under the Transfer of Residence Baggage Rules;
- Goods imported by the actual user;
- Imports by diplomatic missions;
- Import by completely export-oriented industrial units under bonded warehouses;
- Goods imported on a returnable basis;
- Goods for re-export ("Export-cum-import");
- Goods imported on entrepot basis;
- Imports by various educational institutions, charitable organizations and hospitals; and,

- Goods sent home by Bangladeshi nationals living abroad.

Additional Conditions for the Import of Foods for Human Consumption (Section 15)

Milk Food with Fat (Sub-Section 15.17):

All kinds of milk food products, including baby food with fat content, covered under H.S. Heading 04.02 or 19.01 and all H.S. Code classifiable thereunder must be imported in tin containers only.

“There is no alternative to breast-feeding” must be printed clearly in Bangla in a visible space on each can of baby food containing cream. The composition and percentage of various ingredients should be printed in Bangla on the can as well. The dates of manufacture and expiration for human consumption have to be embossed or printed in permanent ink, either in Bangla or English, on each can. Last, the net weight of milk food needs to be clearly indicated on each container, either in Bangla or in English. Separate printed labels are not acceptable on the containers.

Non-Fat Dried Milk (Sub-Section 15.18):

Imports of non-fat dried milk are allowed to be packed in bags or cans. The importer must produce an analysis certificate duly authenticated by the competent authority of the exporting country. The certificate has to include a declaration that the "milk food" (dairy-based foodstuff) is fit for human consumption. The dates of manufacture and expiration for human consumption have to be printed on each bag or container.

All Other Food Items (Sub-Sections 15.19 -15.22):

For imports of all kinds of food and beverages, the dates of manufacture and expiration and net weight must clearly be embossed on each container or package. Separately printed labels are not acceptable. Imports of wine and liquor do not require an expiration date. Dates of manufacture and expiration must be printed on the container or package of raw materials that are used in the preparation of food and beverages.

Pesticides and Insecticides (Sub-Section 25.14):

Pesticides and insecticides are importable so long as they fulfill the following labeling requirements:

- Correct technical/chemical name of the contents marked on the containers;
- Name of the product, name and address of the manufacturer, the formulator or the person in whose name the pesticide is registered;
- Net contents, date of manufacture, date of test, normal storage stability and time limit;
- Name and percentage by weight of active ingredients and total percentage of other ingredients; and,
- Warning or caution statements, such as “Keep out of reach of children” or “Dangerous” printed clearly in Bangla on the containers.

The Product Labeling Policy 2006 is not a regulation enacted by the government; rather, it is a policy undertaken by the government with initiative from the Bangladesh Standards and Testing Institution. The policy ensures that no barriers are created for the importation and exportation of goods and that imported products have proper labels. It explicitly refers to international labeling standards to be observed in 13 sectors. The policy requires that all imported products must carry a label indicating the manufacturer's name, full address and country of origin. All such labels must also indicate ingredients/composition, batch number, code number, and weight and measure in internationally accepted units. Imported goods, including their containers, must not bear any words or inscription of a religious connotation. In all other cases, Bangla or English is permissible for labeling. For imported products, the name and complete address of the importer must be printed on the packets of the items. Similarly, the name and address of the packaging company have to be on the label.

The policy further indicates that additional directives in regards to the preservation procedure, method of use and a cautionary statement should be incorporated on the label of the packaged food item.

The following additional labeling requirements are applicable for agricultural commodities, food, drinks and soft drinks:

- The expiry date/best before date;
- The names and amount of color and preservatives used;
- Mention if the item is genetically modified (GM); and
- If an item can be produced naturally, artificially or by genetic modification, the label is required to mention the method by which the item was produced.

If there is not enough space available on the label, additional printed paper containing the required information may be put into a labeling packet.